

Predators – Predatory animals are legally defined as coyote, weasel, skunk and civet cat (spotted skunk). **LICENSE REQUIRED FOR NONRESIDENT TRAPPERS ONLY.**

Relaxing snare – A relaxing snare has a snare lock that allows the snare loop to release constriction pressure on the captured animal when the cable is not taut (e.g., when the animal stops pulling it will loosen). This means that the locking device on the snare cable operates both ways allowing the snare cable to move back and forth to some degree. Locks that only close or that use springs or other powering devices to hold them closed are not considered relaxing snares. See page (15) for examples of relaxing snares.

Trap – Trapping means to take or participate in the taking of any wildlife protected by the laws of the state by setting or placing any mechanical device, snare, deadfall, pit or device intended to take wildlife or to remove wildlife from any of these devices.

Water Set – Any trap originally set in or on any body of water. This shall include traps on floats in the water and those that are set with a minimum of one-third of the trap submerged. The term water set applies to traps set on beaver dams, in bank holes and in the water at bank slides. This shall not apply to temporarily standing water resulting from any cause, such as rainfall, snow, runoff or flooding.

License and Permit Possession

- Licenses and permits must be carried on your person at all times while in the field hunting and/or trapping.
- Licenses and permits must be produced if requested by FWP Enforcement personnel.

Youth Hunting Opportunities

A resident or nonresident **youth 12 years of age or older** may hunt any game species for which their license is valid. Those who will reach 12 years of age by January 16, 2018 may hunt any game species, for which their license is valid, after August 15 of the 2017 license year. Proof of hunter education must be presented at the time of purchase.

An **Apprentice Hunter** is a resident or nonresident, 10-17 years of age, certified at an FWP office. This allows the youth to hunt some species, while accompanied by a mentor, without first completing a hunter education course. The Apprentice Hunter may not purchase a mountain lion, black bear or wolf license or apply for a bighorn sheep license or a hunting license or permit with a limited quota. The Apprentice Hunter may not purchase an elk license if he/she is under 15 years of age. Other restrictions apply. See our website for details at:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/licenses/all/apprenticeHunter/default.html>

General Trapping Regulations

These regulations apply to trapping of furbearers, predators and nongame wildlife.

Checking and Placing Traps – Traps should be checked at least once every 48 hours. It is the trapper's responsibility to check his/her traps regularly. Failure to pick up traps or snares at the end of the trapping season or attending them in a manner that waste furbearing animals constitutes a misdemeanor per Montana law.

Closures – All National Parks, National Wildlife Refuges and Indian Trust or Tribal Trust lands are closed to trapping except as otherwise specified. For information or permits to trap on National Wildlife Refuges contact the local refuge manager.

Disturbing Traps or Trapped Animals – It is unlawful to destroy, disturb or remove any trap, snare or trapped wildlife belonging to a trapper without permission of the owner of the trap or snare, except that from March 1 to October 1 a landowner may remove any snare from owned or leased land if such snare could endanger livestock as per Montana law.

Export – When transporting game, furbearers or fish between Montana and Canada, whether for commercial or noncommercial purposes, you must complete a USFWS declaration form and inspection. Contact the Wildlife Inspector, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Office of Law Enforcement, P.O. Box 165, 39825 Interstate 15, Sweetgrass, MT 59484 or call (406) 335-4350 or FAX (406) 335-4351.

Exposed Carcass or Bait – No trap or snare may be set within 30 feet of an exposed carcass or bait which is visible from above. Exposed carcass or bait is defined as the meat or viscera of a mammal, bird or fish, or any part thereof that is more than one pound in weight. Bleached bones are excluded.

Game Animals – It is unlawful to hunt any game animal with the aid of a trap or snare.

Ground Sets Along Roads and Highways – Ground sets using 7 x 7 inches and larger body-gripping traps, and all snares, are prohibited within the right of way of county roads, state and federal highways, and interstates. Along county roads with no defined right of way then these ground sets are prohibited within thirty (30) feet from the road center line.

Jaw spread sizes of common conibear traps:

110 - 4.5 inches	220 - 7 inches
120 - 4.5 inches	280 - 8 inches
160 - 6 inches	330 - 10 inches

Hunter Education – All persons born after January 1, 1985, are required to provide proof of completion of a Montana Hunter Safety and Education Course or a hunter safety course in any other state or province prior to applying for or purchasing a hunting license.

Indian Reservations – Contact Tribal Governments for information regarding trapping on Indian Land within the exterior boundary of Indian Reservations.

Fish, Wildlife & Parks will not provide CITES or state pelt tags for furbearers taken from Tribal or Indian Trust lands on reservations. Furbearers legally taken under state regulations with a Montana trapping license, during an open season, from deeded "fee" lands within the exterior boundary of a reservation may be tagged by a designated Fish, Wildlife & Parks employee.

Landowner Permission – Resident trappers and hunters must obtain permission of the landowner, lessee or their agent before trapping or hunting on private land. It is unlawful to set snares on private property without landowner permission per Montana law.

Nonresidents must obtain written permission from the landowner, lessee or their agent before trapping or snaring predatory animals and nongame wildlife on private property as per Montana law.

Littering – A person convicted of littering while hunting, trapping, fishing or camping shall forfeit their license or privileges to hunt, trap, fish or camp within Montana for a period of one year.

Lynx Protection Zones – As part of a 2015 legal settlement special regulations are required in areas identified as "Lynx Protection Zones" to protect lynx and help trappers avoid accidentally taking lynx in Montana. The special regulations for areas within the Lynx Protection Zones are:

- Rabbit or hare parts, whether for flagging purposes or for bait, may not be used within 30 feet of a set trap.
- The use of natural flagging such as bird wings, feathers, or pieces of fur may not be used within 30 feet of a set trap.
- The use of fresh meat baits is not allowed – only tainted bait (bait >24 hours old) allowed.

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- The use of Conibear or “body-gripping” traps are not allowed unless:
 - ▶ they are placed as part of a water set.
 - ▶ they are placed as part of an elevated set that does not include a leaning pole.
 - ▶ they have a jaw spread of less than or equal to 5 inches (a Conibear #120 or smaller).
 - ▶ they are placed in a leaning pole set with a pole diameter of no larger than 4 inches and with trap and bait set at least 48 inches above the ground; or
 - ▶ if they have a jaw spread of >5 inches, they are placed with the trigger recessed a minimum of seven inches and contained in a wood, plastic, or metal enclosure or cubby with an opening no larger than 52 square inches.
- For trappers targeting bobcat, the use of foothold or leghold traps are not allowed unless they:
 - ▶ have an inside jaw spread of less than or equal to 5 3/8 inches;
 - ▶ are placed in a leaning pole set with a pole diameter of no larger than 4 inches and with trap and bait set at least 48 inches above the ground; or
 - ▶ are equipped and set with a minimum 10 pound pan tension device.
- The use of snares are not allowed unless they:
 - ▶ have a cable diameter greater than or equal to 5/64 inches;
 - ▶ have loops that are larger than 8 inches measured from side to side; and
 - ▶ are equipped with a breakaway lock device designed to release when more than 350 pounds of force is applied (all snares must be equipped with a relaxing device).
 - ▶ all snares in Lynx Protection Zones must be equipped with a relaxing device.
- All leaning pole sets must use poles that are no larger than 4 inches in diameter and with trap and bait sets at least 48 inches above the ground.
- “Take” of lynx is not allowed due to their federal status as a threatened species. Incidental captures, whether the lynx is released uninjured, is injured, or killed are all considered “take” according to the definition set by federal law and used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Any incidentally caught lynx that is uninjured must be immediately released, if possible. Any trapper who accidentally takes a lynx is required to notify a designated FWP employee or an FWP Regional Office as soon as possible or within 24 hours. Persons who know about the taking of a lynx shall report it by calling 1-800-TIP-MONT (800-847-6668).
- Trappers targeting bobcat are required to visually check their traps at least once every 48 hours.
- Trappers are strongly encouraged to not set traps if lynx are observed in an area or if lynx tracks are identified. Trappers are also strongly encouraged to use live traps (e.g. box trap) and carry catchpoles to aid in the safe release of non-target species.

Lynx Season Closed – Incidentally trapped lynx that are uninjured must be released immediately and the incident must be reported to a designated FWP employee within 24 hours of release. If a lynx is injured, trappers must immediately notify a designated FWP employee or an FWP Regional Office, to determine disposition and/or collection of the animal.

Montana Stream Access Law – This law does not allow access for trapping or snaring. Trappers are required to obtain permission from the landowner to trap or snare on navigable streams and rivers between the low and high water marks. Permission is required on private land for all non-navigable streams.

Non-Target Species – Trapping or snaring of non-target species could constitute a violation of state law as per Montana law. Protected birds or mammals found in traps, uninjured shall be released on site. Trappers that accidentally trap or snare protected animals that cannot be released uninjured must immediately notify a designated Fish, Wildlife & Parks employee for assistance to determine disposition and/or collection of the animal.

Occupied Dwellings – Ground sets, including all snares, are prohibited within 1000 feet of an occupied dwelling without written notification of the occupant(s).

Recorded Animal Sounds – It is illegal to use any recorded or electrically amplified bird or animal calls or sounds or imitations of bird or animal calls or sounds to assist in the hunting, taking, killing or capturing of any wildlife except predatory animals, wolves, and those birds not protected by State or Federal law.

Snares – All snares are required to be equipped with a breakaway lock device designed to release when more than 350 pounds of force is applied. Breakaway snares must be fastened to an immovable object solidly secured to the ground. The use of drags is prohibited on snares. All snares in Lynx Protection Zones must be equipped with a relaxing device. All bobcat snares in Trapping Districts 1, 2, and portions of 3, 4, and 5 (see map on page 8) must be equipped with a relaxing device.

Snares must be set in a manner and at a time so as not to duly endanger livestock. A trapper who injures livestock in a snare is liable for damage and this constitutes a misdemeanor.

Appropriate breakaway snares and relaxing devices for snares are listed on page 15.

State School Trust Land – A resident Conservation License allows hunters, anglers and trappers access to all legally accessible State School Trust lands. However, licensed trappers are required to obtain a free Special Recreational Use License (SRUL) from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) prior to trapping or snaring on State School Trust lands. Trapping may be restricted to those State School Trust lands as approved in the SRUL. For further information on how to obtain a SRUL, contact one of the following DNRC offices. The deadline to apply for a SRUL is September 30.

**DNRC Headquarters
Trust Land Management
Division**
PO Box 201601
Helena, MT 59620
406-444-1868

Northeastern Land Office
USDA Building, 613 NE.
Main
Lewistown, MT 59457
406-538-7789

Northwestern Land Office
655 Timberwolf Parkway, Suite 1
Kalispell MT 59901
406-751-2240

Southern Land Office
Airport Industrial Park
Billings MT 59101
406-247-4400

Southwestern Land Office
1401 27th Avenue
Missoula MT 59801
406-542-4200

Eastern Land Office
321 Main Street
Miles City MT 59301
406-232-2034

Central Land Office
8001 N Montana Avenue
Helena MT 59601
406-458-3500

Glasgow Unit Office
224 Sixth Street South
Glasgow MT 59230
406-228-2430

State Game Preserves, FWP Wildlife Management Areas (WMA), FWP Fishing Access Sites (FAS) and Parks – All state game preserves are open to furbearer trapping. Wildlife Management Areas with big game winter range, unless otherwise posted, are closed to public entry from the day following the end of the general deer/elk season or December 1, whichever is later, to noon on May 15 each year,